

Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

August 14, 2014

August Commission Meeting Summary

Central Office

by Bob Brendel

Districts

Northwest

Northeast

Kansas City

Central

St. Louis

Southwest

Southeast

Though expressing disappointment at the defeat of Amendment 7 the day before, the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission went about its normal business at last Wednesday's meeting in Jefferson City, approving the 2015-2019 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) along the way.

"I'm disappointed by yesterday's election results," Commission Chairman Stephen Miller said. "But I'd like to recognize the tremendous work that was done by so many people to present the issue. Our responsibility was to educate the public and that we did, and to that end we were successful. (But) the people have spoken and we respect that."

Vice Chairman Joe Carmichael said "I think the message we received is that the people want us to look at other alternatives. I don't believe they voted against transportation, but rather how to fund it."



Transportation Planning Director Machele Watkins said while the STIP is "our five-year commitment to our customers," it reflects the action taken by commissioners in January, when they voted not to include additional projects in this edition of MoDOT's five-year construction program. She said only 30 projects had been added to the STIP – projects that were either critical safety needs or previously approved cost-share projects – when normally 500 or more projects are added.

The STIP further illustrates the downturn in MoDOT's construction budget that has been falling since a peak of \$1.3 billion in 2009. Watkins said this year's budget is nearly half that, at \$720 million, and it will dip to \$596 million next year and \$325 million annually in 2017-18-19. She reminded commissioners that it takes \$485 million each year to maintain Missouri's roads and bridges in the condition they are in today.

In his report, MoDOT Director Dave Nichols updated the commission on recent actions in Washington, D.C. to keep the federal Highway Trust Fund afloat. Nichols said on July 31, Congress approved a short-term fix to keep the trust fund from insolvency, transferring \$10.8 billion to the fund from other sources. The action, though, will only keep the fund solvent until May 31, 2015.

"It's just a band aid," Nichols said. "There needs to be a long-term solution just the same as there needs to be at the state level."

He said some departments of transportation are already planning to postpone lettings early in 2015, and it's something MoDOT may need to take a close look at, too. Almost half of MoDOT's revenue comes from federal sources.

Nichols also expressed his disappointment at the defeat of Amendment 7, but said MoDOT will continue to do its business. The department's focus will be on safety, taking care of our roads and bridges and providing outstanding customer service. He pointed out for commissioners that Amendment 7's defeat will have no effect on MoDOT's staffing level.

"We are the right size and can't get any smaller," he said. The Bolder Five-Year Direction determined that a MoDOT work force of 5,106 was the right number to perform the department's core business.

The commission also took action on the July 25 bid opening, awarding eight construction contracts. They rejected the low bid for a project in Kansas City, deeming it to be excessive. State Design Engineer Eric Schroeter said for the fiscal year to date, awards are running 0.7 percent under budget.

I-70 Mississippi River Bridge Cited as Best in Mid-America

by Linda Wilson Horn

MoDOT has won top honors in the Mid America Regional "America's Transportation Awards" competition for a project that demonstrated the best use of innovation. The new Interstate 70 Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge over the Mississippi River in downtown St. Louis won the best large project in the innovation category at the annual meeting of the Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials.

Now in its seventh year, the America's Transportation Awards competition - sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce - recognizes the very best of America's transportation projects in three main categories: Ahead of Schedule, Under Budget and Best Use of Innovation. The categories are then split up by size: small (less than \$25 million),

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medium (between \$25 million and \$199 million) and large (\$200 million and more).

The \$695 million I-70 Mississippi River Bridge project built a new interstate river crossing in downtown St. Louis to help relieve congestion on the nearby Poplar Street Bridge, which previously carried three interstate highways. Among several other innovations used on the project, Missouri championed an alternate technical concept process to let contractors submit confidential proposals using proprietary techniques, saving more than \$12 million on the contract.

The 10 projects with the highest overall scores from all four AASHTO regions will compete for the Grand Prize and People's Choice Award. The Grand Prize winner is determined by a panel of transportation experts. The People's Choice Award goes to the transportation project that receives the most online votes from the public. Online voting begins September 8. The winners of both awards will be announced at the AASHTO Annual Meeting in Charlotte, N.C., in November.

More information about the I-70 Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge can be found at www.newriverbridge.org. For more information on the competition, visit www.AmericasTransportationAwards.org.

Top left, Assistant Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey (third from left) accepted MoDOT's award for best in innovation for the I-70 Mississippi River Bridge at the Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials annual meeting in July.

Bottom left, this beautiful photo of the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge in all its glory shows it is truly an award winning structure. Additional photos of the bridge can be found on flickr - [Stan Span](#) (bridge photos by Cathy Morrison).

Ready... Set... Innovate!

by Jim Dickson

"Why didn't I think of that?" It's probably the most common response when employees look at Innovations Challenge Showcase exhibits. Simple solutions to everyday problems usually get the biggest response. So why don't you put your innovation to work for the department and some extra cash in your pocket?

This year's Innovations Challenge will have the same three categories – tools and equipment, projects and productivity. The tools and equipment category will include items fabricated or modified by MoDOT employees. The projects category will include efforts resulting in exceptional results for transportation users or internal operations. The productivity category will include office and field process, materials and products.

"There's no reason to mess with success," said Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger. "I think we have the right approach in place. This program has produced some great best practices for the department over the past seven years. Some were as complex as a new highway designs, while others were as simple as using scrap material to create hand tools."

One new addition to this year's program is the Director's Safety Award. A panel of judges will select the showcase innovation that does the most to improve the safety of our customers and employees. The award will include a traveling trophy and an individual cash award if the innovation is not already a showcase category winner.

Here's the timeline for this year's program:

- District and Central Office competitions – Aug. 14 – Dec. 15*
- First-round evaluations – Dec. 15 – Jan. 8
- First-round winners announced Jan. 12
- Second-round statewide evaluations – Jan. 14 – Jan. 28
- Showcase participants announced – Feb. 16
- Innovations Challenge Showcase – April 2015

*Districts may choose a different cutoff date.

What are you waiting for? First-round competitions end in December. You can get an entry form and more details on the program from the Innovations Challenge website at <http://wwwi/intranet/cr/SolutionsAtWork/Innovations.htm>.



Need a refresher on previous innovations? Check out photos of the 2014 winners on flickr - [Innovation Photos](#) and watch a video clip of the showcase - [Video](#). Above, a 2014 statewide innovation, St. Louis District's LED Panic Lights.

Tips for a Winning Challenge Entries

- **Don't think your innovation is too small to count.** Simple solutions to everyday problems can have a big impact. If you had the problem, it's likely your solution may work for other department employees.
- **Don't assume everyone knows about your innovation.** Even if you've been using your innovation for some time, it doesn't mean anyone else has found the same solution.
- **Don't create your innovation in a vacuum.** Get input on your innovation from co-workers, counterparts in other areas and technical experts.
- **Don't just tell how your innovation works.** Show it in action. Think about showing a new employee how your innovation works with a series of photos or a simple video.
- **Don't use time as your excuse not to submit an innovation.** Use your local program coordinator to help put your innovation submission together.

What's Your Entry Worth?

- **First-round win** = \$75 or up to \$450 per team
- **Showcase win** = \$425 or up to \$1,550 per team
- **Showcase best practice** = \$10,000 for district or division budget
- **People's Choice Award** = traveling trophy
- **Director's Safety Award** = traveling trophy
- **Having your innovation used by others** = Priceless



Team Talk

by Roberta Broeker

Some time back, I ran across the proverb: **If the wind will not serve, take to the oars.**

How perfectly and completely MoDOT is that? Right now, it feels a little like not only did the wind not serve us, it blew a gale in our faces!

I won't try to sugar coat it. The failure of Amendment 7 is a big disappointment. But the conversation it generated holds promise. I hope the discussion continues and leads to a solution that will address Missouri's transportation needs. While it's too early to say where the discussion will lead, our direction has not changed. As we have for the last several years, we will continue to:

- Keep ourselves and our customers safe.
- Keep our roads and bridges in the best condition we can, for as long as we can, with the resources we have.
- Provide outstanding customer service.

The vision for transportation that Missourians helped us create last year through *On the Move*, our long-range transportation plan, will guide us. Without additional revenue, it won't be possible to make that vision a reality. We'll simply have to work with our partners to maintain and build the parts of the vision that are within our means, and wait for a funding solution Missourians support. It's not possible for me to predict what the future holds, but I'll concentrate on the goals we have in place and do the best I can every day to meet them. I know you will too.

And even though it is only August, we are gearing up for the next challenge...WINTER! Right now human resources employees are recruiting seasonal workers and emergency operators. You might see those job postings on MoDOT's web site or in various newspapers. Just like last year, we're hiring extra winter weather help because we know our customers depend on us to clear the roads. Emergency operators are a cost-effective method of maintaining that level of service while keeping expenses under control. We're also getting the salt supplies lined up. After the nationwide high usage of last winter, salt prices are up everywhere. Ed and Kathy and I are working with Financial Services to figure out how to adjust district budgets so we don't start everyone out in a hole.

Time and again I've watched you step up, settle down, pitch in, help out, soldier on and head off to do whatever was next. To work with people as dedicated and talented as you is an everyday blessing that I do not take for granted. Thanks Team MoDOT. It's once again time to take to the oars.

MoDOT Features No MOre Trash at State Fair

by Linda Wilson Horn

For 92 years, MoDOT has had a presence at the Missouri State Fair. On Aug. 7 the Transportation Expo Center and



Highway Gardens opened to fairgoers who want to learn a little more about MoDOT. . . or at least take a break from the heat!

The expo center will feature displays about work zone safety, Adopt-A-Highway, Motor Carrier Services, motorcycle and child seat safety and Amtrak. Barrel Bob will be stationed in the highway gardens. Visitors will be encouraged to take selfies at five stations throughout the Highway Gardens. On No MOrE Trash! Day, Aug. 8, fairgoers will be invited to play games in the garden.

Every district and the Employee Advisory Council are hosting days at the fair, which runs August 7-17.

For more details on the fair check out their webpage - <http://www.mostatefair.com/home>.

State Fairgoers Visit MoDOT Highway Gardens

This year's exhibits focus on work zone safety, highway safety, multimodal, motor carrier services and No MOrE Trash! See all fair photos on flickr - [State Fair](#) (photos by Cathy Morrison).



Medical Plan Changes Beginning Jan. 1, 2015 *Reminder to Employees*

by Tammy Wallace



Changes to our medical plan begin Jan. 1, 2015. After this date, retiree medical premiums will be based on the total years of service. The Commission will contribute 2 percent per year of service, not to exceed 50 percent of the total premium.

If you received a letter at your home address about these upcoming changes, you are eligible for retirement or early retirement before these changes take effect. Employees choosing to retire before the changes must retire by Dec. 1, 2014. That means a Notice of Retirement form must be received by MPERS by Oct. 31, 2014 in order to retire effective Dec. 1, 2014.

If you have not visited with your benefits specialist about your options, please do so. These changes to retiree contributions may affect your decision on the timing of retirement. No two employees' situations are alike. Several factors will determine the best option for employees. So talk with your benefits specialist or visit the website for more information - <http://www.modot.org/newsandinfo/Retireemedicalfunding.htm>.

Impaired Driving Claims Lives. Talk About Wasted.

Missouri law enforcement reminds motorists to Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.

by Kelly Jackson

Each day lives are drastically changed or lost in preventable traffic crashes caused by impaired driving. Drivers continue to break the law by driving impaired, putting thousands of travelers at risk daily.

Holiday weekends bring a surge in impaired driving, so this year's Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over high-visibility crackdown will run Aug. 15 through the Labor Day holiday on Sept. 1.

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration data shows that drivers respond well to this type of high visibility enforcement. Past campaigns have resulted in a 20 percent decrease in substance-impaired crash fatalities. On average, one person will die every 34 minutes in an impaired driving crash over the Labor Day period, that's a lot of lives that could be saved.

Statewide, law enforcement made 587 DWI arrests during the impaired driving campaign in August and September of 2013.

Consider the following tips:

- Don't risk it – if you plan to drive, don't drink.
- Encourage safe driving behaviors among family, friends and co-workers.
- Choose a designated driver before partying. A designated driver is someone who drinks NO alcohol at all.
- Take mass transit, a taxicab or ask a friend to drive you home if you have no designated driver and no other means of transportation.
- Party hosts should include alcohol-free beverages for designated drivers.
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- Always wear your safety belt – it's your best defense against an impaired driver.

To learn more about impaired driving and how you can Arrive Alive, visit saveMOLives.com, or follow on social media.



Fatality Update



What's Happening

TMA Awareness Through Social Media

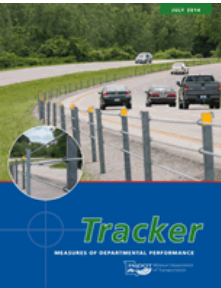
One of the leading causes of crashes in work zones is driver inattention. MoDOT's most vulnerable work zones include slow moving operations that may be moving only 10 mph, like striping, mowing and pothole patching. These operations use truck-mounted attenuators (TMA) at the back of the work zones to alert motorists.



To bring awareness to driving safely in work zones and watching out for TMAs, MoDOT began an eight week campaign using social media to spread the word. The posts feature accident photos, video testimony and safety messages.

Check all the posts and visit back each week through Sept. 2 to see more -

<https://www.facebook.com/MoDOTStatewide>.



New Issue of Tracker Available

MoDOT's Tracker and supplement for July 2014 are available-<http://sharepoint/Tracker/SitePages/TrackerResources.aspx> (link works for employees only).

MoDOT's Tracker is a tool to assess how well we deliver services and products to our customers. It is published quarterly to ensure accountability and allow our customers to see the progress we are making towards those results that they expect.

The Tracker review meeting will be held on Aug. 21 at the Truman Building.

The Tracker Focal Point was not published this quarter.



Chat With The Chief

Remember to check out Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger's blog post. This week he talks about staying the course - [Chat with the Chief](#).

MoDOT Service Awards Program 2014

Service Awards!

Attention 2014 Service Award Recipients! The service award vendor has mailed your brochure packet with the gifts you are eligible to receive. Please keep your eyes open for this packet to arrive at your home address. Instructions for placing your order will be included in the packet.



Deferred Compensation Update

This month's Deferred Comp update provides information on upcoming seminars that help employees understand how to use deferred comp savings to help reach their retirement goals.

Watch the August video - [Deferred Comp Update](#).



Immunization Awareness

August is National Immunization Awareness Month. Take steps this month to protect yourself from serious diseases by getting your necessary immunizations. Check out all the information from Coventry on the Central Office page of Connections – [CO Page](#).

Get Fit With Apps - State Employee Success Story

Coventry is sharing employee health success stories on its webpage. Read the inspirational story of how Kyle Cullifer of the Missouri State Highway Patrol changed his health and life using smartphone apps to lose weight and exercise. It might just be the motivation you're looking for – [Success Stories](#).



Rams Ticket Offers

The St. Louis Rams are offering state employee up to \$25 in discounts on ticket prices for special games. Check it out – [Rams](#).

August Service Anniversaries

35 Years
Vernon J. Hartman - CO

30 Years
Don G. Wichern - NW
Raymond L. Bledsoe - CD
Patrick J. O'Rourke - CD
Stephen E. Brown - CD
John M. Kelemen - SL
Michael T. King - SL
Rebecca J. Baltz - SW
Mark R. Brown - SW

25 Years
Jon M. Knickerbocker - NE

20 Years
Timothy Karl Conover - NE
Marion T. Baker - NE
Nichol M. Cook - CD
Jill Marie Steiger - SL
Dean D. Fry - SL
Robin Lea Wright - SW
Jeffrey P. Hillis - SE
Keith Joseph Bailey - CO
Bryan Joseph Heckman - CO
Brenda M. Braun - CO
Steven E. Clark - CO

15 Years
Larry D. Jones - NW
Jeffrey S. Redden - NW
James C. Morris - NW
Chad Lindsey Arment - NE
Jeffrey E. Wisdom - CD
Douglas C. Zeigenbein - CD
Kyle W. Fischer - CD
Charles L. English - CD
Tim M. Gallatin - CD
Shaire Lynn Fischer - CD
Roger Lee Mann - SW
Darren L. Adams - SW
Shannon R. Chidester - SE
Jo Ann Secoy - SE
Linda Jean Bennett - SE
Mary Kay Seymore - CO

10 Years
Michael C. Abernathy - NW
Sarah E. Marino - NE
Bruce A. Barnes - KC
Sandra Kay Naylor - KC
Richard L. Gerlemann - CD
Jason D. Witt - CD
Jonathan R. Swagman - SL
Tony L. Boyster - SL
Daniel J. Deters - SL

10 Years Continued
Clinton F. Lewis - SL
Floyd R. Cook - SW
Audrey S. McCrite - SE
James A. Howell - SE
Thomas Joseph Brickhaus - SE

5 Years
Timothy K. Hall - KC
Nicholas Ray Meisenheimer - KC
Travis J. Otto - CD
Julie A. Peters - CD
Eric Abbott - CD
Eric Pogue - SL
Cheyenne L. Koch - SL
Stephanie Ayesha Austin Rashid - SL
Amanda Louise Rich - SL
Michael Timothy Kennedy - SL
Kevin Gerald Fox - SW
Katherine Ann Hixson - SE
Daniel W. Kay - SE
Kyle John Winch - SE
Rudolph W. Nickens - CO
Lawrence Redel - CO
Aaron J. Utrecht - CO

Connections

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Customer Relations - MoDOT
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Editor: Tammy Wallace

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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Youth Transportation Conference Hosts 30 Students on Week-Long Learning Fun

by Linda Wilson Horn

MoDOT’s Equal Employment Opportunity Division hosted its 35th annual Youth Transportation Conference July 20-25 in Jefferson City. The students came from across the state, including 16 young men and 14 young women.

The goal of the Youth Transportation Conference (YTC) is to expose high school students to the careers available in the fields of transportation and civil engineering through hands on activities. Throughout the conference, students learn to think like an engineer and have opportunities to work with a variety of materials and tools to build structures and solve problems.

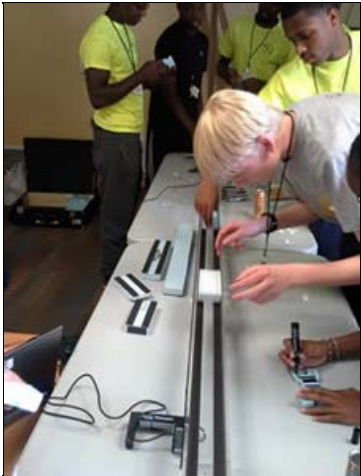
“By engaging students in solving real-world problems, YTC connects students to the working world of transportation,” said YTC Coordinator and Senior Human Resources Specialist Elizabeth Reed. “MoDOT understands that today’s youth will be tomorrow’s leaders and as such, it is necessary to introduce them to these fields now. YTC is also focused on improving workforce diversity by drawing talented young women and minorities to the fields of transportation and civil engineering.”



The 2014 YTC class included 30 students from across the state, 16 young men and 14 young women.



The students worked in teams on many projects including building popsicle towers and concrete canoes and a final small team PowerPoint presentation.



Students developed magnetic levitation cars during one of the YTC exercises.



The YTC students built bridges and tested how much load it could carry.

Motor Carrier Services Announces Moving Plan

by DeAnne Rickabaugh

As General Services completes its transformation of the new location, Motor Carrier Services is busy preparing to move to 830 MoDOT Drive in Jefferson City.

The division will begin the transition on Monday, August 18. Here’s a look at what customers and MoDOT co-workers can expect:

- August 18 - Move Begins. Walk-in customers served at the Creek Trail location. MCS’ toll-free calls are answered from both locations.
- August 19 - Move Continues. Walk-in customers served at 830 MoDOT Drive.
- August 20 - MCS’ toll-free calls are answered at 830 MoDOT Drive. The last group of employees report to 830 MoDOT Drive. Move is complete by end-of-business.

During the next several weeks, MCS customers will receive notice of the move through traditional and electronic means. Customers are encouraged to conduct as much business by phone or Internet as possible – as most carriers now do – because customer parking is limited at MoDOT Drive.

The division will continue to be in lock-down status full time because of federal laws regarding the privacy of sensitive business information. If you’d like a tour, be sure to mention it when you enter the public entrance of 830 MoDOT. MCS staff are happy to show you around.

Motor Carrier Services Director, Scott Marion said, “I can’t say enough about General Services and Information Systems. We sincerely appreciate the teamwork, coordination and all the physical labor they’ve provided to make this move appear seamless to MoDOT’s customers.”

With this move, MoDOT’s Central Office vacates the last of its leased office space. All CO employees will be housed within department-owned facilities.

Parking at 830 MoDOT Drive - With the move, some parking changes have taken place. Employees should park in spots that are painted yellow or white and sized for the appropriate vehicle whether a commuter car or commercial vehicle. If your office is within building 830, please use the employee parking lots. Employees attending meetings, customers, and guests should use the east parking lot. Commercial vehicle lanes have also been added in the east parking lot. See diagram - [830 MoDOT Drive](#).

Interns Gain Valuable Experience at MoDOT

by Patrick Wood

While many college students work at summer jobs that will not benefit them in their field of study, 14 students spent this summer at MoDOT's central office getting real-world experience. The interns experienced what it is like to work in the Human Resources, Governmental Relations, Historic Preservation, Geotechnical, Design, Bridge, Traffic, and Maintenance divisions.

These students came to us from a variety of schools including Mizzou, Missouri University of Science and Technology, University of Central Missouri, Missouri State University, Southern Illinois-Edwardsville, Linn State Technical College and Westminster College. Their majors range from anthropology and civil engineering to communications and graphic design.

Two of the central office interns had the opportunity to work on an archaeological excavation of a French colonial site under the Poplar Street Bridge in St. Louis. Others had experiences ranging from designing displays for the Missouri State Fair to being part of an interview panel and assisting with dynamic messaging sign boards around the state.

Here is what some of the central office interns stated as the most interesting thing they have done during their internships.

Rachael Bax: Helping with the entire job fill process including being a part of the interview panel.

Jessica Beckman: Drawing up the I-girders and box beams and calculating the section properties using Excel. The spreadsheet would come up with a quick way to input the dimensions and the spreadsheet would output the section properties.

Caitlin Smith: Getting to work with multiple divisions to design their displays for the Missouri State Fair.

Kayla Henke: Participating in the internship conference with several other MoDOT interns from all over the state. I also really enjoyed going into the field and filming freight moving down the highway.



Intern Caitlin Smith works on a project for the Maintenance Division.

Grace Gronniger: Spending six weeks in St. Louis working on a French colonial site.

Melody Chester: Working on an archaeological excavation of a French colonial site in St. Louis.

Garrett Hager: Going on the field trips to a bridge being built on the alternate route to Linn, going to the core slab pre-stressed concrete field and visiting DeLong's Steel Factory.

Jeanette Greene: Creating some of the digital message signs that were displayed along Missouri's roadways, and then seeing them as I drove on I-70. Just knowing that others were seeing my signs made me feel as though I was actually making a difference with the work I was doing.

Stick it to Sickness

Being sick is never fun, but there are ways to keep it away. One of the best ways to prevent yourself from getting sick is making sure you have gotten all of the recommended vaccinations and following other preventive guidelines.

Click on Coventry's August newsletter for all the details. The newsletter even includes a great recipe for kale pesto pasta – [August Newsletter](#).

Tips for getting shots:

- Distract yourself. Bring a magazine or something to work on while you wait to get a shot.
- Deep breaths. Make your stomach expand when you breathe to help yourself relax.
- Don't focus on the shot. Find a picture, poster, or a sign and concentrate on the details.
- Cough. A quick cough while getting a shot has shown to decrease the pain.
- Relax. If your arm is tense it can make the shot hurt worse.



Central Office Happenings

First Annual MoDOT Statewide Slow Pitch Softball Tournament

Everyone loves a little softball, so why not bring everyone together for one day of play?

WHO: Open to all MoDOT employees and their spouses. Teams minimum of 10 people. Need a minimum of six teams

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 6. Depending on how many teams, start time at 9 a.m.

PRICE: \$100 per team. This is to pay the umpires and for the field. All remaining money will be donated to the Fallen Workers Memorial Fund

WHERE: 63 Diamond Field, 12575 Renz Farm Rd, Jefferson City.

RULES: There are no rules on how many girls/guys need to be on a team. ASA rules
Complete the roster and send to Amanda Henley by Aug. 27 - [Softball Roster](#)



**Deferred Compensation
Representative Don Wilson**

August 21
105 W. Capitol, CCO Conference Room
8:30 – 3:30 p.m.

To schedule an appointment contact: Bobbie Uballez at 526-1046.

See flier for more information – [Deferred Comp](#)

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Northwest District

Field Trip

by Marcia Johnson

There have not been many days on my calendar lately that aren't full of meetings, conference calls and deadlines, but July 31 was an exception and I took full advantage of it.

A retirement reception was planned for Maintenance Crew Leader Mark Wiley in Bethany at 1 p.m., so on the way to celebrate the long career of this well-respected colleague, I stopped at two work zones in Clinton County to get photographs of some of our maintenance team at work.

I started my career at MoDOT as a Customer Service Representative in 2008 and have discussed different maintenance jobs, such as tube replacements and fixing settled culverts, with customers many times, but had never witnessed these jobs myself. That all changed as I stopped on Route Y, just north of Plattsburg, Missouri, where a small crew was replacing a couple of tubes across driveways and county roads. After speaking with them about their roles on the job they were doing, I drove to Route VV, just north of Route NN, where crews had replaced a cross tube the previous fall. A five-man crew was adding a layer of asphalt across the top of the tube where it had settled.

Both crews work out of our Lathrop maintenance facility and were very welcoming and helpful as they explained their work in detail and answered all my questions. It certainly made me want to schedule more days to visit other crews in the field and learn about the different jobs our folks perform every day.

I highly recommend talking to your supervisor about scheduling a field trip, job shadow or cross training. Learning about the work our colleagues do makes for more knowledgeable employees, stronger relationships between departments and a stronger team.



Maintenance Worker David Poynter watches as Senior Maintenance Worker Tim Porter digs out the trench for a new county road tube on Route Y in Clinton County. Poynter said his job was to make sure the trench was as level as possible.



Porter dug the trench for the new county road tube, maneuvering the large machine and using the jacks to ensure it would not tip on the rough, uneven roadside. After this tube was installed, the crew would move on to place two more tubes in other locations.



Former Maintenance Crew Leader Keven Johnson prepped the road surface for a new layer of asphalt along Route VV in Clinton County. Since these photos were taken, Johnson has left MoDOT for another position.



Johnson guides the dump truck operator, Senior Maintenance Worker Doug Hahn, as asphalt is emptied on top of the settled tube. Maintenance Worker Rusty Baker uses a shovel to distribute the asphalt over the prepared surface.



Johnson, Hahn and Baker use a variety of tools to spread out and smooth the asphalt in the patched section.



Baker and Hahn use a screed to level the new patch as Johnson pulls any excess material towards the shoulder.



Before moving on to a new section to patch, Baker uses a vibrating plate to tamp down the newly laid asphalt.

For more info

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816.387.2495
Marcia.Johnson@modot.mo.gov

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Northeast District

Races, Balloons, Marshmallows and Rain - Good Combination for Child to Work Day



While showers bring pretty flowers, it also brought approximately 20 Northeast District employees and 24 children to the District Office for Bring Your Child to Work Day, which was held on Thursday, Aug. 7.

Since the rain put a damper on maintenance work and outdoor activities, six Northeast District college interns proved to the kids and their parents that being stuck inside together isn't necessarily a bad thing, because they came to the right place for the opportunity to learn something new and to have fun together.

The interns had a full itinerary of activities to keep everyone busy which included PPE relays, work zone bike/trike races in proper PPE attire, build a balloon tower, and last but not least, forming teams and building marshmallow/toothpick bridges which had to pass a load test. Everyone enjoyed refreshments which included asphalt/dirt cake and decorating traffic signal cookies.

Playing games and getting to spend the day with Dad or Mom at work was a sure fire way to bring smiles and laughter all around. Everyone was sent home with a picture (child and parent) with a personalized message from Barrell Bob.

"The interns did a terrific job of getting everyone involved and offered a variety of activities that were fun for every age group," said Northeast District Engineer Paula Gough. Paula added, "I think several of the children may have a future in transportation and engineering." Paula and two of her children, Kayl and Millie, participated in all the activities.



(Top) Tim Hays, materials, and Mike Baxter, help their boys during the build a tower exercise. You can also see the traffic signal cookie they made on the table.

(Middle) Richard DeTienne, New Florence maintenance, wheels his daughter during the PPE bike / wheelbarrow races.

(Bottom) All of the interns got involved! Jeff, Joe and Nathan showed the kids how to properly dress in PPE before the race.

Around the District...



Representatives from Central District Traffic were in the NE District checking reflectivity of stripes in Macon and Lewis counties. This is a test they will perform throughout the state.



Stacy Corbin at the Arrive Alive booth at the Macon County Back to School Fair held Aug. 2. Stacy and Marisa Christy-Kerns worked the table inside, and Deanna Wiggans and Rachelle Wood did child safety seat checks outside. Stacy, Deanna and Rachelle are all with the Macon County Health Dept.



Mike Laks and Roger Page, with assistance from Hannibal and Palmyra crews repair the "stop ahead" sign south of Hannibal on US 61.

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Tiffany Springs Diverging Diamond Marks the Fourth for the District

This month the Kansas City District will open its fourth diverging diamond intersection, the second for the Northland community.



The intersection of I-29 and Tiffany Springs Parkway has been under construction for nearly two years to reconfigure this busy area with a smooth DDI.

What makes this interchange special is that traffic actually crosses from the right side of the road to the left side on either side of the interchange. These crossovers allow for free flowing right turns, and free flowing left turns between the crossovers. This is not only easier on drivers but also reduces one of the more common accidents at left-turn intersections.

A fifth DDI in the district begins next month at I-49 and Route 291 in Harrisonville. The nation’s first DDI was built by MoDOT in Springfield in 2009.

Click here to watch the [Tiffany Springs project from beginning to end](#). Click here to [watch an animation of a DDI in motion](#).

It's a Jungle Out There

Mowing your lawn more often at home compared to the last few summers? Think how busy this season is for MoDOT’s maintenance workers. After several hot, dry summers this season’s cooler, wetter summer is keeping MoDOT’s maintenance crews busy with trimmers, mowers, sprayers and chainsaws. It’s a jungle out there, and it’s trying to take over the highways.

“At the beginning of the season it was slow growing in the cool spring weather, then the rain came, temperatures heated up and everything grew,” said Platte, Ray and Clay Counties Superintendent Chris Sholl.

“Everything is growing by leaps and bounds this year,” said Maintenance Superintendent Kevin Mullins, whose team covers Lafayette, Saline and Pettis counties. Kevin and the other superintendents said it’s more of a battle this year keeping up with noxious weeds such as Johnson grass, Russian thistle and teasel, not to mention mowing the grass and cutting away small trees, limbs, branches and vines from around signs and near intersections where the growth is blocking sight distances.

Travis Jones, superintendent for Cass and Johnson counties, said the hot, dry summers in the past kept down the weeds, but now that dormancy is over, the green has come roaring back. “If you don’t spray them (with growth retardant or weed killer) for several years, it’s more difficult, and now it’s a catch-up program,” Jones said.

The brush – tree branches and other woody plants – is a bit more challenging this year with so much more rain and cooler temperatures that are ideal for that kind of growth.

“Most call reports I’ve had have been about brush, trees and limbs down over the roadway or in front of signs,” Jones said.

For the more urban, developed areas, the challenges are much the same, said Maintenance Superintendent Marcus Slaughter, who deals with Jackson County. “We’ve got it all. We run a night crew all summer long to take care of the weeds. It just seems like it wants to grow like crazy, and come back with a vengeance.”

Whether the city’s concrete and asphalt mass seems to lock in the heat, or there is less open area for a cooling breeze to flow, summer remains hot and sticky for workers. Slaughter points out that urban crews have plenty of hand work - weed trimming around slopes, guard cable and uneven terrain that makes a day along the urban roadways that much less pleasant. He also said that areas where salt has slowed or prevented grass growth don’t seem to make much of a difference to weeds, which always seem to thrive.

So, until cooler temperatures arrive, crews will keep busy making sure our roads and roadsides are safe for motorists with as many tools as necessary.



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District Chip Seal Operations in Action

Annual Central District chip sealing operations are wrapping up this week and district workers will have logged roughly 100 miles of life-extending treatment on mid-Missouri roadways. Contractors have completed another 200 miles of chip seal, lengthening the life of 300 miles of highway within district borders.

How does chip sealing work?

Chip-seal work includes seal coating the roadway surface to prevent water from entering cracks in the pavement and deteriorating the road. The process consists of placing small aggregate on top of the sealant as it dries. Crews return after the treatment to sweep the remaining loose material from the road surface.



This cost-effective method of roadway maintenance extends the pavement life of the route and makes the road safer by adding texture to improve the skid resistance of the surface.

Click on the video above to see one of our chip seal operations in action! You can also view the video here: <http://youtu.be/pCH1ej3h0UM> or at our Central District YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/MoDOTCentral) or at our Central District Facebook page (www.FaceBook.com/MoDOTCentralMissouriDistrict).

Holland gets Certificate of Appreciation

Central District Senior Maintenance Worker Curt Holland was recently awarded MoDOT's Certificate of Appreciation for playing a role in saving an individual's life.

On May, 27, 2014, Holland was traveling west in a boom truck on Route 8 near Potosi when he saw a motorcycle and a person lying on the ground. Holland called 911 and during the course of two calls, he directed emergency workers to the accident scene. The victim was airlifted to the hospital. Curt's keen observation and quick actions likely played a role in saving the motorist's life.

We'd like to take the time to recognize Curt and thank him for his continuing service to MoDOT and to the motorists of the state of Missouri.



Senior Maintenance Worker Curt Holland (center) poses with his Certificate of Appreciation and (left to right) Assistant District Engineer Travis Koestner and District Engineer David Silvester.

Time Lapse Video of Bridge Construction

In the last edition of Connections, we published a timelapse video of the demolition of the Route B bridge. This edition we've got a timelapse video of the progress on the bridge to date.

You can find the video to your lower right or at this link: <http://youtu.be/V-xrBcF1vDs>

If you want to track how the replacement of the bridge is progressing daily, you can view a camera that captures bridge images every 10 minutes. It can be found on the project webpage here: www.modot.org/central/major_projects/RouteBBridge.htm.

Bridge pictures, detours and information and videos about the bridge's innovative construction technique called geosynthetic reinforced soil can also be found on the site. This bridge-building method is faster and less expensive than traditional methods because it eliminates the need for driving costly and time-consuming bridge piles.

The Route B bridge over Business Loop 70 is closed for replacement until Sept. 15. The \$881,239 bridge is being built by APAC-Missouri.



Around the District



Intermediate Maintenance Worker Ryan Kliethermes helps to regulate traffic during a recent operation near Vienna.

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Family Advocate Organization Honor St. Louis Engineer

by Shaunda White

For the past six years Betherny Williams has volunteered time linking students to engineering principles through common high school courses like physics and algebra. Because of that reason and many other commitments, Williams, a St. Louis senior construction inspector, was honored with the 2014 St. Louis Community Service Award from the Better Family Life organization on July 30.

Williams frequently takes the time to volunteer and mentor high school students at schools such as the Construction Career Center located in St. Louis. She has also participated in numerous career day events in more than a dozen school districts throughout the St. Louis area.

Williams currently is a member of the Social Justice and Human Rights Initiative Committee. The committee meets monthly and addresses gender equality issues such as domestic violence, low self- esteem, and human trafficking just to name a few. They also get out into the community and follow-up with recipients to ensure that they continue to progress.

Even through MoDOT Williams consistently participates in the Summer Transportation Camp Conference, which is held annually in Jefferson City. Because of her dedicated service and commitment to the departments’ education and community outreach programs, she earned the 2009 Volunteer of the Year Award.

“I am a woman of service and with that being said, I do not feel the need to be recognized. I allow the services I provide to speak on my behalf. But yet and still I am truly honored to receive this award. Someone gave me an opportunity, so I am more than happy to provide opportunities for others,” said Williams.



Betherny Williams speaks at the ceremony of which she was honored with the 2014 St. Louis Community Service Award.

SL Crew Leader receives Safety Recognition for June

by Shaunda White

Erick Price made it perfectly clear that Team MoDOT was more than just a saying at the Ballas maintenance building of which he previously worked at as a crew leader. His actions of ensuring a safe work environment at all times have led to him receiving recognition as the June Safety Employee of the month in the district.

Price was nominated for this recognition by his supervisor for his continued ability to successfully train other employees on how to safely maintain and operate the Crafcro crack sealing machine.

At any maintenance facility, the Crafcro machine is an essential piece of equipment, but it also has the potential to become a hazard without proper attention. When the machine is on, it is always set at 500 degrees Fahrenheit, and if it overheats it could catch on fire. For that reason, Price has made it his safety practice to always monitor the temperature of the machine while it is on.

Price will even postpone taking his lunch so that while his co-



Erick Price explains the importance of monitoring the Crafcro crack sealing machine to ensure a safe environment.

workers eat, he can monitor the machine.

“Erick is an employee whose pride in safety shows through his work ethics. I witnessed him adjusting his lunch time so that the Crafcro machine would not go unmonitored. He promotes a positive and safe work atmosphere,”said Mike Foppe, maintenance

superintendent.

Price takes his role as a crew leader seriously and makes sure that any employee that comes in contact with the Crafcro machine is fully trained to avoid any mishaps or injuries.

“Safety is not just a ‘Me’ thing, it is a team effort. At the end of the day the number one goal for all of us is to go home safely in one piece. We all work together in maintenance to make sure that goal is achieved every day,”said Price.

Price is now a crew leader at the Sunset Hills maintenance building. He stated that the only thing that has changed is his work address and his safety practices will follow him no matter what building he works out of.

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Southwest District

Southwest District at Work



A LITTLE TO THE LEFT... – Branson Senior Construction Inspector Gill Welton (left) reviews placement of a utility pole with a representative of Ozark Electric Cooperative on Route CC between Nixa and Ozark. Contractor crews are working to widen the intersection of Cheyenne Road and Route CC and remove an “s” curve on Route CC near Fremont Hills. (Photo/David Mitchell)



SMOOTHING THE WAY – Seymour Maintenance Crew Leader Justin Watson (left), Seymour Maintenance Crew Leader Cody Key (center) and Senior Maintenance Worker Chad Embrey put the finishing touches on a patching operation on Route PP west of Fordland. (Photo/David Mitchell)



NEW DRAIN PIPE –Lamar Senior Maintenance Worker Travis Peterson (left) and Lamar Maintenance Crew Leader Bert Phipps roll a new drain pipe into place on Route K west of Liberal. (Photo/David Mitchell)



BOOM! – Contractor crews demolished the Route MM/B bridge over I-44 west of Springfield Friday night, Aug. 8. Click the image above to watch a short video of the demolition. Work is now underway to build a new bridge over I -44. (Photo/Garen McElroy)

SW District Sees Significant Decrease in Vehicle Backing Incidents

by David Mitchell

As a result of renewed education and training, vehicle backing incidents in the Southwest District are down 60 percent so far in 2014, compared to the same time in 2013.

According to District Safety and Health Manager, Gary McLarry, there have been six vehicle backing incidents so far this year compared to 15 between January and July of last year.

For all of 2013, there were 22 incidents.

“We’re thankful,” McLarry said. “In the last three years, with all of our backing incidents, we have only had one impact to a person.”

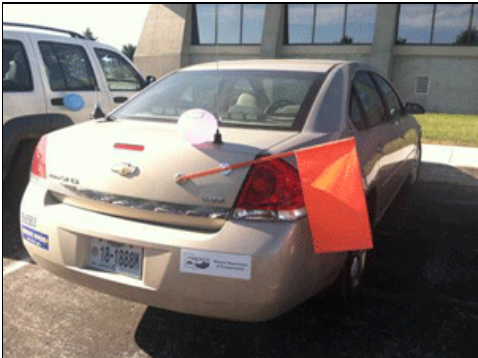
The district is trying to be creative in getting its safety message across. Recently, McLarry attached balloons to a number of cars used by the District Management Team in the parking lot at the District Office in Springfield. On each balloon was a check mark inside a circle, reminding the driver to do a circle check around the car.

“The circle check balloons were something I did to get the attention of the office staff,” McLarry said. “We must lead by example.”

MoDOT policies require a spotter to be used, when available, when backing equipment and vehicles. The district also is conducting a pilot program, placing magnetic flags on vehicles which encourages circle checks. The hope is that the program will lead to fewer vehicle backing accidents.

Last April, the district established a “No Backing Day” when all employees were encouraged to plan out job tasks and stage equipment and vehicles to avoid backing where possible.

According to the National Safety Council, one out of four vehicle incidents are the result of poor backing techniques, accounting for 500 deaths and 15,000 injuries every year.



Magnetic flag used as part of a pilot program to encourage circle checks of MoDOT vehicles before backing. (Photo / Gary McLarry)

SW District Employees Raise Money for Charity

by David Mitchell

Southwest District employees raised another \$537.28 for the Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign (MSECC) during the month of July.

Of that amount, \$274.78 came from a “Cute Pets Contest.”

Seventeen entries were on display in the District Office in Springfield as part of the MSECC. Employees voted for their favorite pet by dropping money in jars set up for each pet.

The top three winners were:

- Yodie Needham (owned by Sharon Needham, Senior Highway Designer)
- Ruby Payne, a.k.a. W Lady Drift Dandy (owned by Jodie Payne, Senior Risk Management Technician)
- Penelope Raney (owned by Aron Raney, Ozark Senior Maintenance Worker)

Half of the funds raised will go to the Home for Life Cat Sanctuary, a no-kill animal shelter in Buffalo that rescues dogs and cats.

The rest will go to the Southwest District Employees Fund. The employee fund was established to assist District workers who experience significant hardships due to serious illness or a life-changing catastrophic event.

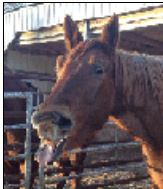
Another \$262.50 came from the sale of t-shirts. Half of that money will go to the Ozark's Food Harvest, with the remaining going to the employees’ fund.

Ozarks Food Harvest is a regional food bank serving 200 hunger-relief organizations in 28 counties in southwest Missouri.

“I just want to say ‘thanks’ to everyone who participated,” said Area Engineer Darin Hamelink, who helped organize the fund raisers. “The money will go to two very good charities and help employees down the road in their time of need.”



Yodie Needham
(Photo / Sharon Needham)



Ruby Payne
(Photo / Jodie Payne)



Penelope Raney
(Photo / Aron Raney)

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Southeast District

Memorial Highway Dedication Ceremony Planned to Honor Lathams



A memorial highway dedication ceremony to honor the Latham family will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6 at the Catfish Bowl, located at 106 St. Mary Street in Pilot Knob.

State Representative Paul Fitzwater acquired the necessary 100 signatures to designate Route A from Route 49 to Route 32 in Iron and Reynolds Counties the "Latham Memorial Highway."

The memorial highway signs will honor both Opal and Edward Latham for the legacy of improvements they left behind for area travelers.

"My mother, Opal Latham, was a driving force behind getting Route A asphalted in the 1960s," said Ms. Shirley Harrell. Harrell also explained that her father, Edward Latham, sold his land in support of improvements to Route A.

100 Missouri Miles Challenge

Summer may be drawing to a close, but there's still time to participate in the 100 Missouri Miles Challenge! MoDOT employees have until Dec. 31 to log miles.

To register:

1. Visit 100missourimiles.com and create an account on any computer or device
2. Select the Groups tab at the top of the page
3. Under *Find a Group* select workplace
4. Enter "MoDOT" as the Keyword
5. Select the Southeast District team
6. Join the group and get active, then log your miles back on the website.

Top 5 in This Group

Rank	Initials	County	Total Mileage
1	J. R.	Butler	686 mi
2	S. B.	Cape Girardeau	350 mi
3	C. R.	Howell	307 mi
4	A. B.	Scott	299 mi
5	G. B.	Howell	284 mi

Click the image above to view the Southeast District's group for the 100 Missouri Miles Challenge.

To date, the Southeast District has 54 group members who have collectively logged over 6,000 miles. Keep in mind that your family members can also join the 100 Missouri Miles Challenge and don't forget to log your miles

Construction Underway!

Customers Thank SE District

Customer Calls to Thank Patton Maintenance Shed:

A very nice lady called in yesterday evening and wanted to thank anyone involved in



Work is underway to improve the Route 95/60 interchange in Wright County. Construction is expected to be completed in early September.

cutting and trimming the intersection of Route A and Route M in the Marquand area. She said that this area had grown up and there were sight distance issues. Please thank everyone for their hard work.

Mr. Bowen Thanks Kennett Shed:
I sent you a message this morning about tall weeds blocking the sight of traffic on a highway 53 bridge. I could not believe it but this afternoon the guys were out here and took care of the matter. I wish others would take responsibility like that.

Thank you so much. They did a great job!!
David Bowen

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